

A.
The Secretary of War to Silas Dinsmore.
WAR DEPARTMENT,
15th October, 1911.

SILAS DINSMORE—
SIR: Complaints have repeatedly been made to this Department, from respectable sources, of the practice of arresting the servants of gentlemen travelling through the Choctaw country, without passports.

In future, you will suffer the servants of persons of known respectability of character, and where no design of fraud is apprehended, to pass unmolested, when accompanying their masters; and you will deliver over to their masters, those servants who have been detained for want of the

The Secretary of War to Silas Dinsmore.
 WAR DEPARTMENT,
 24 January, 1812.
 Sir: Your letters of the 13th November and
 6th December, have been received. The con-
 tention of the letter from this Department, of the 15th
 of October last, was to invest in you a discretion
 to act in cases where, from your knowledge of the
 persons, no evil could result from a relaxation of
 your instructions, and a real grievance would en-
 sue from a strict execution of them. Such a dis-
 cretion was all that was contemplated, and all that
 is intended you should exercise. I have, &c.
 WM. EUSTIS.
 SILAS DINSMORE, Choctaw Agent.

the Indians, provide against all trespasses and encroachments on the Indian Territory, but are not construed to authorize the stopping of any person travelling through the country, in a peaceable manner, on the public road or high-way; you will, therefore, refrain from the exercise of any such authority hereafter."

Silas Dinmore to the Secretary of War.
CHOCTAW AGENCY,
13th November, 1811. }
SIR: I received your letter of the 13th October,
on the 3d instant. The crowd of Indians assem-
bled to receive their annuity, prevented me an-
swering by the return mail.
Complaints have been made to me, as well as to
your Department and

I have also received the thanks of every man of color in the Mississippi Territory, with whom I have been in contact, for the manner in which I have treated them. I have also received the thanks of every man of color in the Mississippi Territory, with whom I have been in contact, for the manner in which I have treated them.

have conversed, for the security my vigilance has given to their property, by intercepting fugitive slaves, and rendering their escape through the wilderness almost an impossibility. And, while the law requires of every person coming into this country to be provided with a passport, a complaint from a person violating this law, and to the Executive Department of the Government, too.

which is bound to enforce the law, would seem to come with a very ill grace. Querie—Ought not the complainants to be prosecuted for the penalty of the law, and the complaint read in evidence? Suppose the complainants, Mr. A. and Mr. B., had, when they appeared at the Agency house, without passport, been reported to the Indians as having violated the law, and they should have initially been there with the Indians.

I refer to the first section of those instructions, given under the seal of the War Office, 8th May, 1892, and beg you to take the trouble to read it. It was always understood, that the exercise of a sound discretion in the construction and application

Should you still determine that the law and former instructions shall in any manner be suspended?

beg that your orders may be general, and not impose on me the unpleasant task of discriminating between the exterior appearance and the reality of a gentleman. At the moment your letters arrived, a negro was brought (arrested by my order) 183 miles distant. He was in the possession of Jesse McGarey, son of Col. Hugh McGarey of Kentucky, a young man of decent deportment.

he, however made his escape, and the negro provided to be the property of Mr. Barnes, a planter of the Mississippi Territory. I will wait your further instructions, and obey them; and am, respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

SILAS DINSMORE.

The Hon. WILLIAM EUSTIS,
Secretary of War.

Extract of a letter from Silas Dinmore to the Secretary of War, dated Choctaw Agency, 6th Dec. 1811.

"I feel very much embarrassed with respect to a proper conduct to be pursued respecting negroes passing through this country without passport.—By the last mail I received letters stating, with urgent importunity, that four negroes had crossed

"P. S.—I enclose you an advertisement, which I distributed last April; it was predicated on the

complaints of slaves escaping too easily through the country, and I thought I had availed myself of strong legal ground to check the evil.¹⁹

[Enclosed is Mr. Dinwiddie's letter to the Secretary of War.]

TAKE NOTICE TRAVELLERS.

Whereas complaints are made, that runaway negroes effect their escape through the Indian

countries, under the protection of pretended masters: I hereby give notice, that I shall arrest and detain every negro found travelling in the Choctaw country, whose master has not a passport as the law requires, and also evidence of property in such negro.

SILAS DINSMORE,
United States' Agent to the Choctaws.

April 110, 1911.

Extract of a letter from Silas Dinsmore to the
Secretary of War, dated Washington, M. T.,
Dec. 23d, 1911.

"The advantages of my alertness in checking
the plunder of property, as stated in my letter of
the 13th November and 6th instant, will be con-

ruined by the enclosed resolution of the Legislature of this Territory. A full conviction of the necessity of executing the law of the U. States, (meaning the third section of the law of intercourse) has induced me to continue to exact reports of all negroes, until I shall receive positive orders to the contrary. The comparative few who have been stopped and who comply, bear so small a proportion to the whole, that I have not been

proportion of the number who approve the law, that I should feel myself delinquent in neglecting to execute asheretofore, and the enactment of this legislature was intended to show or express the general impression of approbation on my conduct. I hope you will view the subject as I do, & I at